

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

SELECTIONS
FROM THE
VERNACULAR NEWSPAPERS.

JUNE 30—JULY 7, 1875.

THE *Agra Akhbar* of the 30th June has an article "contributed by a correspondent" who, acknowledging that there is one law for Europeans and another for the natives of the country, advises the latter to cease complaining of the partiality shown in courts of law, for "though Her Majesty's Government makes no distinction between European and Hindustani subjects, but allows equal privileges to all, it rests entirely with its officers to give or not to give effect to its wishes."

The *Aligarh Institute Gazette* having justified the appointment of Maulvi Farid-ud-din to a Sudder Suddurship, the *Jalwa-i-Tur* criticises his contemporary's article, arguing against the appointment as being "both wrong in principle and at variance with old usage."

The *Mayo Memorial Gazette* protests against the prevalent employment of Gujars as village chaukidars in the vicinity of Delhi; the facts that they are thieves "professionally," and that the population of the local jails is mainly composed of Gujars, being adduced to support the protest.

The *Atalik-i-Hind* of the 3rd July animadverts on "the extortions practised by Government officials and other influ-

ential persons on poor laborers and hucksters by paying them insufficiently for articles purchased," and the inability of the latter "under the existing *régime*" to obtain redress. To obviate the expenses and delays of regular law suits, the editor proposes the appointment of Honorary Magistrates with powers to decide summarily cases up to Rs. 10.

The *Panjabi Akhbar* of the same date, in a long 'communicated' article, premising the propriety of keeping up an "adequate" number of troops in time of peace and the inadequacy of the present force, suggests "the training of the natives of the country in military discipline and the exercise of arms, and the adoption of the militia system." As a beginning the writer recommends "the withdrawal of the prohibition against the free use of arms, and the formation of the native servants of the Civil Departments in each province into a corps of volunteers."

A correspondent of the *Wakil-i-Hindustan* of the same date, writing from Jhelum, pleads for leniency in the collection of the cattle-tax there, on the ground of an unusual mortality among the cattle owing to the prevalent drought.

The *Sadadarsh* of the 5th July notices, as an instance of the delay experienced in the settlement of pensions, the case of an assistant in the office of the Superintendent of the Agra Division of the revenue survey, who has been waiting for his pension sixteen months.

The *Khair Khwah-i-Alam* of July 7th states that considerable alarm has been caused at Ghazipur "by a special regulation laid down for that district, by which zemindars are to pay in the Government revenue within five days from the date of serving the writs of demand on them on pain of being thrown into prison, and their estates sold by auction after fifteen days."

The *Lauh-i-Mahfuz* of July 2nd ridicules the assertions (of an Anglo-Indian newspaper) that a coolness had sprung

up between the Maharaja of Gwalior and the British Government in consequence of his opinion as a member of the Baroda Commission not having been acted upon, and that Colonel Osborne's application for furlough had been refused, as he was considered the only political officer suitable for the conciliation of the Maharaja. The editor acknowledges His Highness to have had ample grounds for dissatisfaction, but considers it absurd to suppose that he would express it, "as His Highness is a truly loyal ally and a staunch friend of Government;" and continues—"even if he were to show any signs of displeasure, these should rather be interpreted as a strong proof of his devotion to Government, as we are in bad humour only with those with whom we are on intimate terms."

The editor then goes on to prove "the absurdity of what has been further alleged," by the aforesaid journalists, "that forty millions of Mahrattas are at present disaffected towards Government, and that one-tenth of the writings of the Bengalis are full of seditious sentiments." He writes,—“The sudden suspension of Maharaja Mulhar Rao from the sovereignty of Baroda, and the authoritative interference of Government in the affairs of that State, had at first prejudiced the Mahrattas against Government; but the appointment of the Commission and the installation of Syaji Rao in the sovereignty of Baroda have effectually removed all ill-feeling and re-assured the people. As to the Bengalis, though their writings may have the appearance of sedition, they have never taken up arms against the Government.”

The *Rohilkhand Akhbar* of the 7th July writing on the same subject excuses the freedom with which the Native Press criticises the acts of Government by saying "the natives pride themselves on the justice of Government and have ceased to regard it as a foreign Government. Such being the case, they freely represent their complaints and grievances, and fight for their rights and privileges just as the people of England do."

[The *Lauh-i-Mahfuz* of July 2nd, and the *Khair Khwah-i-Alam* of the 7th, invite attention to alleged mismanagement in the State of Tonk, and the *Panjabi Akhbar* to similar causes for dissatisfaction in the States of Jhalrapatan and Kotah. Numbers of ryots are stated to be emigrating from Kotah "in consequence of the severity of the Government revenue demand."

The *Sadadarsh* of the 5th July has an article on the relations existing between the chiefs of Native States and their Residents or Political Agents:—

"It is an axiom with the Government that a highly-placed European official is incapable of doing any positive wrong. At best he may be guilty of carelessness or indiscretion, or error of judgment; but nothing worse can be laid to his door. So long as this belief keeps its hold over the Government, the Political Department will never be thoroughly reformed. It is high time that our rulers should realize the truth that human nature is much the same under a black as under a white skin, and that if the native has his vices, the European has also his peculiar failings. It should also be borne in mind that the superior prestige of the European, and the support he invariably receives from his countrymen whenever he is in trouble, enable him to do many things with impunity which a native can never dare to do.

"The position of the native princes of India is, in many respects, far from what it ought to be. The meanest British subject enjoys many rights and privileges which are not possessed by the so-called sovereign princes who administer their own territories. It is no exaggeration to say that the feudatory chiefs are generally at the mercy of the Political officers who represent the paramount power at their Courts. On the principle that Her Britannic Majesty has succeeded to the prerogative of the Great Mogal, the British Crown can do with the feudatory chiefs of India what it likes; and the Government of India always acts upon the reports of its Poli-

tical officers. A day labourer in British India could not have been condemned in the manner in which the ex-Nawab of Tonk was convicted of complicity in the murder of certain persons on the mere *ex parte* report of an incompetent Political officer, and without being allowed the opportunity of clearing himself of the suspicions which attached to him. We know that the veriest street pickpocket would not have been convicted by the jury in a British district on the worthless evidence which was advanced before Sir Richard Couch's commission against the ex-Gaekwar. The paramount power can, however, deal with the feudatory chiefs in any way it likes; and as it always places implicit confidence in the reports of its accredited Agents, the officers of the Political Department wield an amount of power which can be better imagined than described.

" We can well understand why there should be representatives of the paramount power at the courts of the native princes. However distasteful the measure may be to the latter, they must, circumstanced as they are, accept it. But the position, duties, and responsibilities of the Residents should be very clearly defined, so that there may be no mistake about them. When the political officer goes beyond his province and interferes in matters with which he has no concern, as he very often does, the case, indeed, assumes a serious aspect. There are some over-zealous Politicals who are not satisfied with simply doing their duty. They encroach on affairs which do not come within their sphere, and the weakness of the native princes enables them to do so. The inevitable consequence in such cases is friction with the chiefs. There are, again, Politicals like Colonel Phayre, who do not scruple to employ spies in order to keep themselves informed of what passes in the chief's palace. It is also a well-known fact that political officers have scarcely any sympathy with the feudatory chiefs to whose courts they are accredited. We cannot describe the relations which generally exist between native chiefs and the political officers better than in the

following language of an English contemporary :—‘ The ill-relations which commonly exist between the native princes and our Residents, and the conduct which the former have frequently to submit to from the latter, are known to every man in the country. It is idle to deny that we have treated the princes of India badly by imposing upon them Residents who were personally distasteful to them. Thus, the whole country knows that Travancore was tyrannised over for years by the Resident we insisted on keeping at his court.’ There is no member in the Government who dare plead ignorance of the fact. While there is no appointment of greater delicacy in the public service than that of Resident, one-half of the men in these positions are unfit to hold them from their bad temper, disagreeable manners, want of judgment or want of tact; but the Government knows nothing about it, we are to understand? We have not the slightest hesitation in saying that the Baroda crisis would not have arisen if the Foreign Office had had the common sense to remove Colonel Phayre from the State in June last, when Lord Northbrook’s Government generously granted Mulhar Rao eighteen months’ grace to reform his administration. Several protests were made by the unfortunate prince against the Colonel’s continuance at Baroda, but they were not heeded until it was too late. Political considerations ought doubtless to carry weight, but surely every other consideration ought not on that account to be entirely lost sight of.

“ It is no secret that the Foreign Office is presided over by His Excellency the Viceroy himself. Nothing could be better than this arrangement. But it is much to be regretted that His Excellency has not yet thought fit to direct his attention to the reform of the Political Department. After the startling revelations made at the Baroda trial, it is high time that the traditions of the Foreign Office should be broken. We must, however, confess that Lord Northbrook has taken an important and bold step in recruiting the higher offices in the Political Department. His Excellency has acted very

wisely in appointing Mr. A. C. Lyall, of the Civil Service, to one of the highest places in that delicate branch of the public service. There exists a very great necessity for breaking through the old groove of the Political Department, and throwing it open to the members of the Civil Service. It is to be hoped that the precedent laid down in Mr. Lyall's case will be extensively followed; and ere long we hope to see the Political Department cease to be the monopoly of a certain class of officers who have been brought up in its traditions. It is absolutely necessary that there should be periodical transfers among officers of the Political Department, as well as in the other branches of the public service. As things now stand, many officers are kept too long in some offices—a system which is fraught with mischief. Political officers should not on any account be permitted to imbibe local prejudices and acquire undue local influence. It is above all things most important that the Political Agents should be impressed with the fact that they have no right to interfere with the internal administration of the States. They should be distinctly given to understand that their business is to watch and advise, not to dictate. They should not be allowed to usurp the authority of the chiefs and reduce them to mere nonentities.

“Lord Northbrook is said to have issued instructions to the effect that ‘whenever any communication, either verbal or in writing, is made to a native ruler by an official acting under instructions, a copy of the communication so made should be at once forwarded for the information of the Governor-General in Council.’ This is good so far as it goes. But the Foreign Office should recognize its duty of keeping an eye on the doings of the political officers. It ought to be borne in mind that these officers, as a rule, remain in out-of-the-way places, in the midst of ignorant and timid native populations, where there is no press or public opinion to check their vagaries. They can generally have their own way with impunity. Such being the case, it is the more necessary that the proceed-

ings of Residents and Political Agents should be carefully watched by the Foreign Office. When a native chief asks for the removal of a particular officer from his court, his prayers ought not to be summarily rejected, but the matter should be fully considered. Nothing could be a greater mistake than to suppose that high English officials are immaculate beings, and that they can do nothing wrong. Mulhar Rao will not have suffered in vain if his case opens the eyes of the Foreign Office to the unsatisfactory relations which generally exist between the feudatory chiefs and the representatives of the paramount power at their Courts."

The *Sadadarsh* of the 5th of July, noticing that Government has subscribed for 200 copies of the *Kashi Patrika* (a Hindi paper recently started at Benares) before the first number of the paper had been published to enable Government to decide upon its merits, explains the fact by saying that "the editor of the *Kashi Patrika* is a protégé of Raja Shiva Prasad, C.S.I."

The *Akhbar-i-Anjuman-i-Panjab* of the 2nd, the *Panjabi Akhbar*, and also the *Atalik-i-Hind* of the 3rd July, protest against compliance with the application of the Royal Asiatic Society for the transfer to London of certain statues, &c., at present at Lahore on, among others, the ground that "the statues in question are many of them objects of worship by a particular class of Hindus."